

Amy Kimura #60
March 20, 1985

Q: Mrs. Kimura, how old were you in 1941?

A: 8th grade.

Q: Were you going to school then?

A: Uh huh.

Q: What school did you attend?

A: Waipahu Intermediate and High School. But I was working as a school girl during the week days on the campus.

Q: As a school girl what did you do?

A: Did the house chores and cooking for the couple who was school teachers.

Q: Oh, so you worked on the campus there?

A: Mhmm.

Q: Where were you living?

A: Ewa Puuloa

Q: What do you remember about the morning of December 7th, 1941?

A: Well, the night before we got back late from after basketball game.

Q: Mhmm.

A: Then when they started to bomb and the planes were flying over, Dad went out and he came back and he said, "This is not a practice. This is a war." he said. Then he picked up the shrapnel and said this is from the bomb and everything. Then we all went out. He said, "All you dummies get in the house." So we had to get back in the house. But we saw some planes chasing each other and tripping backwards, going down, up it goes, turning around, chasing back and forth. And we saw a couple of planes going down behind our road, our section. It's called the Center Road. It's end of our property. In the mean time the pygmy people came back with all empty truck camouflaged and said, "This is a war."

Q: Which people?

A: The garbage people... pygmies. We have some pygmies way inside of the Ewa Puuloa. Ewa Puuloa was a farming country.

Q: As a young girl, what did you think of all this?

A: Well, at the beginning, we didn't feel anything. But after that, when out on duty, Dad was a WWI veteran and they called him at American Legion at Ewa Station. So he went out. When he left the house, we didn't feel anything. When it down to sun dust, we thought we lonely in the dark house with only four girls(mother and two sisters, and myself).

Q: So you stayed in the house the whole day, did you?

A: Yeah, whole day, all night, pitch dark. The only thing we can see is the Army and Navy trucks going back and forth in front of our house, with the very low dim lights.

Q: How long was your dad stay away?

A: Two nights. Then he came back because we were told that we would have to evacuate and we didn't know if Dad was coming home or not, because he says he's going directly to work in the morning. So we decided we going to hitch hike out to Waipahu Town. Once we get out to Waipahu Town, we have some friends and relatives in Waipahu Town, so we got things ready and left that afternoon with the Defense working truck. We stopped a Defense truck, asked for help. So they took us out to Waipahu. In the mean time I saw Dad coming home. I said, "Mom, that's Dad!" But we just crossed each other and we went to Waipahu, but we left a note on the door that we in Waipahu. Pick us up in Waipahu. Then next thing, Dad came back with our neighbor. Our neighbor was a half a mile away; a couple from the Big Island, had no place to go. So he brought them out. So we stayed in Waipahu for awhile. Then we got evacuated to Honouliuli Japanese School.

Q: What were conditions like over there?

A: Well, it was a Japanese School; one round building. The evacuation center was open at Ewa Japanese School, but we decided to go to Honouliuli Japanese School because the community. Dad knew the community well. So we went to Japanese School.

Q: About how many people were in the school there?

A: I don't know but by the time we decided to go to the Honouliuli Japanese School, half of the group came in to the Japanese School so it was... two classroom. So one was used for kitchen and one was used for bed; like an army barracks. Everybody set up together, in one big room.

Q: How long did you folks stay there?

A: We stayed about half a year, because the farmers were going back and forth to work.

Q: Did you go back to Ewa, back to your home after that?

A: No, then the Navy took over our property. We got paid by the Government for our property at the cost price. We were fortunate they didn't condemn our property like they did other sections, because we had a good lawyer on our lots, eh?

Q: Where did you move after that?

A: Then we moved out to Wahiawa. I stayed with my grandfather, with five uncles. My parents went with other aunties so... but I went to Grandpa's because Grandpa needed help.

Q: You had mentioned that someone told you to evacuate your house up in Ewa. Do you remember who it was that told you? Was it the military or...

A: No, from the police department.

Q: Oh, from police department, O.K.

A: So we were evacuating, giving us I.D. cards to go in only during the daylight time, hours, eh?

Q: You also mentioned that your father who was a WWI veteran was called up with the American Legion. Did he ever tell you where he spent those two days? Where they sent him?

A: No.

Q: No? Alright. What was his first name?

A: Kiyohide.

Q: Could you spell that?

A: K(c)i(c)y(c)o(c)h(c)i(c)d(c)e

Q: O.K. Now on the day of the attack, were the planes coming right over your house.

A: Right over our house, because from Ewa Puuloa, that's West Lock side Ilikopue(?), right across to Barbers Point, eh? We were in about the center.

Q: What direction were they coming from, did it seem to you?

A: Pearl Harbor section.

Q: So they were going...

A: They were going to Barbers Point, made a clear route into the ocean, and back again to Pearl Harbor.

Q: So it's almost like they were circling...

A: Circling around.

Q: I see. Could you see the Rising Sun on their wings?

A: Rising Sun, American flag, and at times we could see the pilot and copilot because it's so low, eh? But we were fortunate in our area that we didn't have any casualties.

Q: Was there any shooting in your area?

A: Uh huh.

Q: Any damage to any of the houses?

A: In the back lot, or the Center Road, they had a couple of damages, but we weren't allowed to go. We were told in the beginning not to leave the home. My Dad's communication was not to leave the home, and then, that was on the on Monday, we had some um Marines come over to check our homes with bayonet. At that moment, we were afraid because we were only four girls in the house, O.K.? With about half a dozen of the servicemen came in bayonets, and big husky people. So the neighbors were kind of afraid too. We didn't know what was going on and uh... we didn't think about Dad discharge paper at that moment. But they searched our house from the attic to the bottom and around the... the homes were new, so everybody had bombs to dig out yard. But our dynamite was taken December 7th by Waipahu plantation police man. They come down because they know we have some left over dynamite. So they took our dynamite away. So we were clear. We didn't have no ammunition in our yard. But we did have some dynamite because we had to dig our own yard.

Q: I think I asked your father's first name but I didn't ask his last name.

A: Kimura.

Q: Oh... Was your father pretty calm through all this?

A: He knew about it. He was a very calm man.

Q: Must have been pretty reassuring to have somebody there who was calm.

A: Yes. Then he did a community job a lot too. Can't get excited at least 200 take that daughter down from your neck, with all the shrapnel flying, yah? He picked up a shrapnel before he say this is a real war. He said Americans are not that stupid to use this kind of ammunition. So we.... really frightened.

Q: I imagine it must have been; especially being a young girl and all alone. Things must have been pretty tense right after the attack, and uh...

A: The worst time when they came to inspect our home you know, and as they came down, our section was a neater section

already. At the end of the section they did quite a bit of knocking things down and they knocked quite a bit of the shrines... Buddhist shrines as I have it in the back of mine. But Mother just held onto it. See what is a law suit. It doesn't even say freedom of speech, freedom of religion. And you look at Mother and you see it was agreeable. He say yes. So they didn't knock our shrine down. But in the evening when they had the second attack, it sound crazy but the something was new to us was really fabulous. But Dad says after we talked about it, Dad says, "What did you girls think was fabulous?" Fireworks. Then he says, "You think it was fabulous when people were dying?" Yes Dad that's right too. But...he says, "No buts about it. That's war." Then Dad got to be a... they didn't want him in the service because he was a little too old. So he was working at the railroad. But he was given permission to go in Pearl Harbor because he was a veteran. (next sentence too difficult to understand)... with the railroad company.

Q: O.K., well, it's sounds like an interesting story and... can you think of anything else?

A: No, I hate through again... after I see what's going on. If you think the pilots and copilots is part of your family, how do you feel about it? That struck into our lives after talking to Dad, yah? We said it was fabulous night works, but after sitting down and talking to him our minds were all changed.

Q: O.K., well thank you very much.

A: Your welcome.